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JUNE 15, 1978

FILE

DOUGLAS J. BENNET, JR.
Assistant Secretary for
Congressional Relations
Department of State
Washington, D.C. 20520

Dear Mr. Bennet:

I am enclosing an affidavit signed under penalty of perjury by Deborah Blakey. Ms. Blakey recently escaped from the People's Temple and is extremely concerned for the welfare of not only John Victor Stoen, but also the remaining U.S. citizens in Jonestown.

She points out that while the State Dept. has made some contact with American citizens living in Jonestown, its investigation to uncover the actual conditions is inadequate. I continue to regard this matter as extremely important, and again request your assistance in reaching some solution.

The Guyanese judge has now had a habeas corpus matter under submission for nearly five months. This is wholly unacceptable under any law with which I am familiar, and I think without question constitutes "excessive delay". Further, referring to paragraph (17) of the enclosed affidavit, Ms. Blakey makes it clear that the delay is due to Mr. Jim Jones threats of mass suicide.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR

REVIEWED BY _____ DATE _____

RDS☐or XDS☐EXT. DATE _____

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I have been advised that the State Dept.'s legal advisor would be in contact with me regarding an interpretation of international law governing this case. Our position was enclosed with our letter of March 16, 1978. As of yet, I have received no response.

I look forward to your immediate attention to this most critical situation.

Very truly yours,

JEFFREY A. HAAS

JAH/kh

Enclosure

AFFIDAVIT OF DEBORAH LAYTON BLAKEY
RE THE THREAT AND POSSIBILITY OF MASS SUICIDE
BY MEMBERS OF THE PEOPLE'S TEMPLE

I, DEBORAH LAYTON BLAKEY, declare the following under penalty of perjury:

1. The purpose of this affidavit is to call to the attention of the United States government the existence of a situation which threatens the lives of United States citizens living in Jonestown, Guyana.

2. From August, 1971 until May 13, 1978, I was a member of the People's Temple. For a substantial period of time prior to my departure for Guyana in December, 1977, I held the position of Financial Secretary of the People's Temple.

3. I was 18 years old when I joined the People's Temple. I had grown up in affluent circumstances in the permissive atmosphere of Berkeley, California. By joining the People's Temple, I hoped to help others and in the process to bring structure and self-discipline to my own life.

4. During the years I was a member of the People's Temple, I watched the organization depart with increasing frequency from its professed dedication to social change and participatory democracy. The Rev. Jim Jones gradually assumed a tyrannical hold over the lives of Temple members.

5. Any disagreement with his dictates came to be regarded as "treason". The Rev. Jones imbued an overseas

who left the organization a "traitor" and "fair game". He steadfastly and convincingly maintained that the punishment for defection was death. The fact that severe corporal punishment was frequently administered to Temple members gave the threats a frightening air of reality.

6. The Rev. Jones saw himself as the center of a conspiracy. The identity of the conspirators changed from day to day along with his erratic world vision. He induced the fear in others that, through their contact with him, they had become targets of the conspiracy. He convinced black Temple members that if they did not follow him to Guyana, they would be put into concentration camps and killed. White members were instilled with the belief that their names appeared on a secret list of enemies of the state that was kept by the C.I.A. and that they would be tracked down, tortured, imprisoned, and subsequently killed if they did not flee to Guyana.

7. Frequently, at Temple meetings, Rev. Jones would talk non-stop for hours. At various times, he claimed that he was the reincarnation of either Lenin, Jesus Christ, or one of a variety of other religious or political figures. He claimed that he had divine powers and could heal the sick. He stated that he had extrasensory perception and could tell what everyone was thinking. He said that he had powerful connections the world over, including the Mafia, Idi Amin, and the Soviet government.

8. When I first joined the Temple, Rev. Jones

seemed to make clear distinctions between fantasy and reality. I believed that most of the time when he said irrational things, he was aware that they were irrational, but that they served as a tool of his leadership. His theory was that the end justified the means. At other times, he appeared to be deluded by a paranoid vision of the world. He would not sleep for days at a time and talk compulsively about the conspiracies against him. However, as time went on, he appeared to become genuinely irrational.

9. Rev. Jones insisted that Temple members work long hours and completely give up all semblance of a personal life. Proof of loyalty to Jones was confirmed by actions showing that a member had given up everything, even basic necessities. The most loyal were in the worst physical condition. Dark circles under one's eyes or extreme loss of weight were considered signs of loyalty.

10. The primary emotions I came to experience were exhaustion and fear. I knew that Rev. Jones was in some sense "sick", but that did not make me any less afraid of him.

11. Rev. Jones fled the United States in June, 1977 amidst growing public criticism of the practices of the Temple. He informed members of the Temple that he would be imprisoned for life if he did not leave immediately.

12. Between June, 1977 and December, 1977, when I was ordered to depart for Guyana, I had access to coded radio broadcasts from Rev. Jones in Guyana to the People's

Temple headquarters in San Francisco.

13. In September, 1977, an event which Rev. Jones viewed as a major crisis occurred. Through listening to coded radio broadcasts and conversations with other members of the Temple staff, I learned that an attorney for former Temple member Grace Stoen had arrived in Guyana, seeking the return of her son, John Victor Stoen.

14. Rev. Jones has expressed particular bitterness toward Grace Stoen. She had been Chief Counselor, a position of great responsibility within the Temple. Her personal qualities of generosity and compassion made her very popular with the membership. Her departure posed a threat to Rev. Jones' absolute control. Rev. Jones delivered a number of public tirades against her. He said that her kindness was faked and that she was a C.I.A. agent. He swore that he would never return her son to her.

15. I am informed that Rev. Jones believed that he would be able to stop Timothy Stoen, husband of Grace Stoen and father of John Victor Stoen, from speaking against the Temple as long as the child was being held in Guyana. Timothy Stoen, a former Assistant District Attorney in Mendocino and San Francisco counties, had been one of Rev. Jones' most trusted advisors. It was rumored that Stoen was critical of the use of physical force and other forms of intimidation against Temple members. I am further informed that Rev. Jones believed that a public statement by Timothy Stoen would increase the tarnish on his public image.

16. When the Temple lost track of Timothy Stoen, I was assigned to track him down and offer him a large sum of money in return for his silence. Initially, I was to offer him $5,000. I was authorized to pay him up to $10,000. I was not able to locate him and did not see him again until on or about October 6, 1977. On that date, the Temple received information that he would be joining Grace in a San Francisco Superior Court action to determine the custody of John. I was one of a group of Temple members assigned to meet him outside the court and attempt to intimidate him to prevent him from going inside.

17. The September, 1977 crisis concerning John Stoen reached major proportions. The radio messages from Guyana were frenzied and hysterical. One morning, Terry J. Buford, public relations advisor to Rev. Jones, and myself were instructed to place a telephone call to a high-ranking Guyanese official who was visiting the United States and deliver the following threat: unless the government of Guyana took immediate steps to stall the Guyanese court action regarding John Stoen's custody, the entire population of Jonestown would extinguish itself in a mass suicide by 3:00 p.m. that day. I was later informed that Temple members in Guyana placed similar calls to other Guyanese officials.

18. We later received radio communication to the effect that the court case had been stalled and that the suicide threat was called off.

19. I arrived in Guyana in December, 1977. I

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spent a week in Georgetown and then, pursuant to orders, traveled to Jonestown.

20. Conditions at Jonestown were even worse than I had feared they would be. The settlement was swarming with armed guards. No one was permitted to leave unless on a special assignment and these assignments were given only to the most trusted. We were allowed to associate with Guyanese people only while on a "mission".

21. The vast majority of the Temple members were required to work in the fields from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. six days per week and on Sunday from 7 a.m. to 2 p.m. We were allowed one hour for lunch. Most of this hour was spent walking back to lunch and standing in line for our food. Taking any other breaks during the workday was severely frowned upon.

22. The food was woefully inadequate. There was rice for breakfast, rice water soup for lunch, and rice and beans for dinner. On Sunday, we each received an egg and a cookie. Two or three times a week we had vegetables. Some very weak and elderly members received one egg per day. However, the food did improve markedly on the few occasions when there were outside visitors.

23. In contrast, Rev. Jones, claiming problems with his blood sugar, dined separately and ate meat regularly. He had his own refrigerator which was stocked with food. The two women with whom he resided, Maria Katsaris and Carolyn Layton, and the two small boys who lived with him,

Kimo Prokes and John Stoen, dined with the membership. However, they were in much better physical shape than everyone else since they were also allowed to eat the food in Rev. Jones' refrigerator.

24. In February, 1978, conditions had become so bad that half of Jonestown was ill with severe diarrhea and high fevers. I was seriously ill for two weeks. Like most of the other sick people, I was not given any nourishing foods to help recover. I was given water and a tea drink until I was well enough to return to the basic rice and beans diet.

25. As the former financial secretary, I was aware that the Temple received over $65,000 in Social Security checks per month. It made me angry to see that only a fraction of the income of the senior citizens in the care of the Temple was being used for their benefit. Some of the money was being used to build a settlement that would earn Rev. Jones the place in history with which he was so obsessed. The balance was being held in "reserve". Although I felt terrible about what was happening, I was afraid to say anything because I knew that anyone with a differing opinion earned the wrath of Jones and other members.

26. Rev. Jones' thoughts were made known to the population of Jonestown by means of broadcasts over the loudspeaker system. He broadcast an average of six hours per day. When the Reverend was particularly agitated, he would broadcast for hours on end. He would talk on and on

while we worked in the fields or tried to sleep. In addition to the daily broadcasts, there were marathon meetings six nights per week.

27. The tenor of the broadcasts revealed that Rev. Jones' paranoia had reached an all-time high. He was irate at the light in which he had been portrayed by the media. He felt that as a consequence of having been ridiculed and maligned, he would be denied a place in history. His obsession with his place in history was maniacal. When pondering the loss of what he considered his rightful place in history, he would grow despondent and say that all was lost.

28. Visitors were infrequently permitted access to Jonestown. The entire community was required to put on a performance when a visitor arrived. Before the visitor arrived, Rev. Jones would instruct us on the image we were to project. The workday would be shortened. The food would be better. Sometimes there would be music and dancing. Aside from these performances, there was little joy or hope in any of our lives. An air of despondency prevailed.

29. There was constant talk of death. In the early days of the People's Temple, general rhetoric about dying for principles was sometimes heard. In Jonestown, the concept of mass suicide for socialism arose. Because our lives were so wretched anyway and because we were so afraid to contradict Rev. Jones, the concept was not challenged.

30. An event which transpired shortly after I

reached Jonestown convinced me that Rev. Jones had sufficient control over the minds of the residents that it would be possible for him to effect a mass suicide.

31. At least once a week, Rev. Jones would declare a "white night", or state of emergency. The entire population of Jonestown would be awakened by blaring sirens. Designated persons, approximately fifty in number, would arm themselves with rifles, move from cabin to cabin, and make certain that all members were responding. A mass meeting would ensue. Frequently during these crises, we would be told that the jungle was swarming with mercenaries and that death could be expected at any minute.

32. During one "white night", we were informed that our situation had become hopeless and that the only course of action open to us was a mass suicide for the glory of socialism. We were told that we would be tortured by mercenaries if we were taken alive. Everyone, including the children, was told to line up. As we passed through the line, we were given a small glass of red liquid to drink. We were told that the liquid contained poison and that we would die within 45 minutes. We all did as we were told. When the time came when we should have dropped dead, Rev. Jones explained that the poison was not real and that we had just been through a loyalty test. He warned us that the time was not far off when it would become necessary for us to die by our own hands.

33. Life at Jonestown was so miserable and the

physical pain of exhaustion was so great that this event was not traumatic for me. I had become indifferent as to whether I lived or died.

34. During another "white night", I watched Carolyn Layton, my former sister-in-law, give sleeping pills to two young children in her care, John Victor Stoen and Kimo Prokes, her own son. Carolyn said to me that Rev. Jones had told her that everyone was going to have to die that night. She said that she would probably have to shoot John and Kimo and that it would be easier for them if she did it while they were asleep.

35. In April, 1978, I was reassigned to Georgetown. I became determined to escape or die trying. I surreptitiously contacted my sister, who wired me a plane ticket. After I received the ticket, I sought the assistance of the United States Embassy in arranging to leave Guyana. Rev. Jones had instructed us that he had a spy working in the United States Embassy and that he would know if anyone went to the embassy for help. For this reason, I was very fearful.

36. I am most grateful to the United States government and Richard McCoy and Daniel Weber, in particular, for the assistance they gave me. However, the efforts made to investigate conditions in Jonestown are inadequate for the following reasons. The infrequent visits are always announced and arranged. Acting in fear for their lives, Temple members respond as they are told. The members appear

EXHIBIT

to speak freely to American representatives, but in fact they are drilled thoroughly prior to each visit on what questions to expect and how to respond. Members are afraid of retaliation if they speak their true feelings in public.

37. On behalf of the population of Jonestown, I urge that the United States Government take adequate steps to safeguard their rights. I believe that their lives are in danger.

I declare under penalty of perjury that the foregoing is true and correct, except as to those matters stated on information and belief and as to those I believe them to be true.

Executed this ___ day of June, 1978 at San Francisco, California.

DEBORAH LAYTON BLAKEY

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DEBORAH LAYTON, A FORMER AIDE TO JIM JONES
She told of armed guards and savage discipline.

California has now turned to a military-style vigilance against an imminent attack by unspecified "mercenaries," Layton said.

The temple fields are patroled by two rings of khaki-uniformed armed guards, men and women members of "security alert teams" who have access to 200 to 300 rifles, 25 pistols and a homemade bazooka, [illegible]

sion an elderly woman was humiliated by being forced to strip, younger members are "knuckled" by having fists ground into their foreheads, and others are ordered to an underground "box" where they must sit, for day at a time, Layton said.

Jones has ringed the work fields with loudspeakers and talks [illegible] stretches of [illegible] says, she added. [illegible]

[illegible] visits from outsiders whom Jones wished to impress, church members are treated to meat and vegetables. Other trusted followers she claimed were drilled to give optimistic opinions about life at the mission, called Jonestown.

Jones, who often went to elaborate lengths to protect his public image in San Francisco, has remained at the mission, refusing even to venture into Georgetown, she reported.

Among his concerns has been a pending child custody case in the Guyana capital.

She said the 1000 followers were told to drink a bitter brown liquid potion, after which they supposedly would fall asleep and then be shot by Jones' guards. The rehearsal went as far as having the community drink a phony potion before Jones called it off, Layton added.

Layton said she was able to leave Guyana by wangling a trip to Georgetown. After several days she secretly arranged with American consular officials to obtain an emergency passport and flew to New York on May 13. She is now living in San Francisco.

"Everyone there wants to leave, I'm sure of it," she said, "But you never get a chance to be alone. Everyone is told to spy on other people."

Layton, who was in charge of church finances here before joining the Guyana colony last December, said Jones controls bank accounts in Europe, California and

This [illegible] is based on a recent survey of the nation's adults, who were asked to indicate whether they believe in a wide variety of phenomena, ranging from such staples as astrology to deja vu, the illusion that you have been some place or done something you haven't.

Here are the main findings:

A solid majority, 67 percent of those aware of unidentified flying objects believe they are real and not imaginary. In Great Britain, where there have been far fewer "sightings," [illegible] are found [illegible] believe in flying saucers.

A majority of 51 [illegible] lieves in angels. The [illegible] increases to 61 percent among persons surveyed who say their religious beliefs are very important in their lives.

About half of those interviewed (51 percent) believe in extra-sensory perception. Two-thirds of persons with a college background (64 percent) do so.

About four in ten (38 percent) of the sample say they believe in devils (50 percent of those who say their religious beliefs are very important in their lives).

Precognition, the feeling that something is going to happen that hasn't actually happened, and deja vu, the feeling you have been someplace you haven't been before, or have done something you haven't done before, are common beliefs. Four in ten (37 percent) Americans believe in precognition, while three in ten (31 percent) believe in the existence of devils.

Twenty-five percent of Ameri-

Peoples Temple

Ukiah.

Layton described Jones as a "paranoid" who demands the complete loyalty of his followers by making them pledge "suicide for the glory of socialism."

On one occasion, she said, Jones tested the loyalty of the group by ordering everyone to drink a "brown liquid" which he told them was a pesticide.

After consuming the bitter potion, Layton said, everyone was to drink large quantities of an alcoholic beverage to induce drowsiness before being shot by Jones' guards.

Jones, she said, called off the stunt after everyone drank the potion.

After she arrived at the sprawling agricultural mission in December, Layton said, she was told to work in the fields for the first month or so, from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. each day. "The sun is so hot," she says, "you get blisters on your body."

While she tended the temple's flourishing vegetable crop, Jim Jones' voice blared out over a speaker system that encircles the fields. There were days, she said, when he would speak for six hours at a time.

Jones, she said, would read his own version of the news, which almost invariably included stories of government corruption and CIA plots in the United States. He would ramble on and on with socialist and communist theory, claiming Russia and Cuba are "the spiritual motherland."

On several occasions, Layton said, Jones talked about his deep admiration for Uganda's dictator Idi Amin.

In addition to claiming he is God, Layton said, Jones tells his followers he "is a reincarnation of Lenin."

After spending a month tending the fields, Layton was transferred to the temple's ham radio shack, where she was trained in the secret codes used for communications with the 200 or so followers still in San Francisco.

Later, Jones placed her in the trusted position of temple bookkeeper, the same position she held at the temple in San Francisco.

Layton claims the books show Jones has "at least $10 million" stashed away in bank accounts in Europe, Guyana and California.

Much of the income that supports his operation in Guyana, she says, comes in the form of Social Security checks that are mailed to elderly residents there. Those checks, which are immediately signed over to the temple, total more than $65,000 per month, she said.

Layton said she had no intention of ever going to Guyana. When temple officials assured her she would be allowed to come home after two months, however, she reluctantly agreed.

After a week in Georgetown, she was taken to Jonestown, the Guyanese government's name for the remote colony.

"When I got to Jonestown and saw the armed guards," she says, "I knew I didn't want to stay."

Two rings of 50 armed guards, both men and women, form "security alert teams" that surround the compound, she claims. The guards, she said have access to an arsenal that includes between 200 and 300 rifles, 25 pistols and a homemade bazooka.

Layton describes life in the compound as "so structured you had no freedom to yourself, no time to be alone."

Residents there survive on a diet consisting primarily of rice and vegetables.

Interpersonal relationships are forbidden, she claims, without prior approval of "the relations committee," a group of loyal followers who must first approve such arrangements on a three-month trial basis.

During those three months, the couple is allowed to talk together, but must not show any physical affection. After that period, Layton says, the committee reviews the relationship and decides whether the couple will be allowed to live together for six months.

Living together at Jonestown, she adds is no honeymoon experience. Once approved, the couples are moved into cabins that contain 14 bunkbeds each. Each couple is given one bunkbed.

The regimented lifestyle and the brutalities would always be temporarily suspended, she says, when an outside visitor was at the compound.

"When Charles Garry (Jones' attorney) was in Guyana," she said, "he was given the best cabin there. Everything changed. The food was better. There was dancing and partying."

After two months in Jonestown, Layton asked temple officials to return her to San Francisco, but they refused. The officials told her there is a "huge CIA conspiracy" against Jim Jones. "They told me I would be arrested when I arrived in the United States and questioned," she said, "and (that) if I didn't give information (to the CIA), I would be tortured."

The opportunity to escape finally came in May, when she was sent on temple business to Georgetown. She escaped from the group and turned herself in to American consular officials, who granted her an emergency passport and agreed to safeguard her departure from Guyana. She flew to New York on May 13 and is now living in San Francisco.

Temple officials continue to deny the charges against the church and the Rev. Jones.

"We absolutely refute all the charges," said Tim Clancy, a church spokesman in San Francisco. "This just makes us believe more than ever that there is a conspiracy against the church."

Escapee tells of suicide plan at Rev. Jones outpost

A [illegible] Temple aide who escaped last month from "The Promised Land," the church's 27,000-acre farm in Guyana, South America, claims the 1,100 U.S. citizens residing there are prepared to commit mass suicide on the orders of their leader, the Rev. Jim Jones.

Deborah Layton, 28, a graduate of Santa Rosa Junior College who joined the controversial church when it was headquartered in Redwood Valley, told The Press Democrat that Jones has set up an elaborate plan for exterminating the population at the jungle outpost if it should ever come under attack.

"There was a group assigned to take care of (kill) the children," she [illegible] the office [illegible] San Francisco. "Then there was another group assigned to take care of those who spoke out against Jones . . . Everybody who was going to kill anybody had someone assigned to them as well."

When Haas went to Guyana to represent Grace Sloen in a custody battle with Jones in September, Layton said, Jones ordered her and other temple aides to threaten Guyanese officials with a grisly ultimatum.

Jones, she said, ordered her to tell the officials "that if everything wasn't worked out (the custody case), everyone would be dead by 5:30 (p.m.). She claims she was [illegible] incident."

Jones, she said, described this [illegible] as "The crazy nigger appeal."

Grace Sloen and her estranged husband, Tim, former assistant district attorney of Mendocino County, are awaiting a decision from the Guyanese court on the legal battle [illegible] custody of their son, John, [illegible] six.

The Rev. Jones claims he is the father of the child.

"John Sloen is treated very well," said Layton. "He lives with Maria Katsaris, who lives in the main cabin where Jim Jones lives." Jim, she added, "calls Jim Jones [illegible] womb."

According to official records, John Sloen was born Jan. 25, 1972 at Santa Rosa Memorial Hospital. Tim and Grace Sloen are listed on the birth certificate as the child's parents.

Maria Katsaris' father, Steve, has filed a libel suit against the temple over allegations by Maria that he molested her as a child.

Katsaris, a spokesman for Concerned Relatives, a group that is trying to open communications with relatives at the jungle outpost, is the director of Trinity School.

(Continued on Page 12A)

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